

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CCO-00 CIAE-00 OTPE-00

FCC-02 INR-07 NSAE-00 OC-06 USIA-15 COME-00

BIB-01 /050 W

-----220803Z 035416 /14

R 201025Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY DOHA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2435

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

USINT BAGHDAD

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

UNCLAS DOHA 0362

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETEL, QA

SUBJECT: GOQ TELECOMMUNICATION PLANS

REF: (A) 76 DOHA 990; (B) 76 DOHA 1149; (C) DOHA A-10

1. IN INTERVIEW WITH JALAL MAHDY, DIRECTOR OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS, MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS, ON MARCH 16, EMBOFF RECEIVED FOLLOWING INFORMATION ON GOQ PLANS FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS:

A. PRESENT NATIONAL COMMUNICATION PLANS ARE BASED ON USE OF COAXIAL CABLES RATHER THAN RADIO. THE PLANS WOULD BE SHIFTED TO RADIO IF BETTER DISCIPLINE COULD BE ESTABLISHED IN GULF AREA (MAHDY MENTIONED IRAN AS WORST OFFENDER.)

B. TELECOMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT WOULD STILL
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LIST AS TOP PRIORITY CHANGING TELEPHONE SYSTEM TO ELECTRONIC SWITCHES FROM PRESENT MECHANICAL STEP-SWITCHES. PROBLEM IS IN RECEIVING ALLOCATION FOR CHANGES. TELEPHONE SYSTEM ALWAYS OPERATES IN DEFICIT AND THUS NEEDS SUBSIDIZING. SUBSIDIES ARE EASILY OBTAINED FOR CURRENT EXPENSES BUT NOT FOR PROGRAMS TWO OR THREE YEARS AHEAD, SUCH AS CHANGING TO

ELECTRONIC SWITCHING.

C. TELECOMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT IS RECRUITING TRAINING EXPERTS THROUGH THE INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS UNIT. THIS SUBJECT WAS DISCUSSED DURING MEETINGS BETWEEN MAHDY AND MOHAMMAD MEILY OF ITU DURING MEILY'S VISIT TO QATAR (SEE SEPTTEL).

D. QATAR PLANS TO CUT INTERNATIONAL TELEPHONE RATES AGAIN BEFORE END OF 1977. ACCORDING TO MAHDY, QATAR RATES ARE ALREADY LOWEST IN ARAB WORLD (ABOUT 28 PERCENT OF WHAT OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES CHARGE). RATES WERE LOWERED TO PRESENT LEVEL IN JAN. 1976.

E. QATAR IS ANXIOUS TO ESTABLISH COAXIAL CABLE LINK THROUGH HOFUF TO SAUDI TELEPHONE SYSTEM BUT SAUDIS, ACCORDING TO MAHDY, HAVE NOT YET ACCEPTED QATARI SUGGESTION.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TELEPHONE SYSTEMS
Control Number: n/a
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Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977DOHA00362
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770097-0679
Format: TEL
From: DOHA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770341/aaaabjop.tel
Line Count: 81
Litigation Code IDs:
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Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 DOHA 990, 76 DOHA 1149, 77 DOHA A-10
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14-Oct-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3055014
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GOQ TELECOMMUNICATION PLANS
TAGS: ETEL, QA
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/578c5cb5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009